supports. (See Plate LXXII, 4 and 22.)[1] Unlike the looms in Ilocos that are built underneath the house, using the upright beams supporting the dwelling for part of the loom structure, Caticugan looms are kept inside the dwelling. The loom is a Malayan horizontal type with two foot treadles that manipulate two cord heddles for speedy intercalation of the spool shuttle.[11] The weaving product is a coarsely-woven stiff fabric called abaca (Cebuano: hinabol).

286

Nearly all women who wove abaca said they learned the technique from their mothers; one informant said she was taught by her father who had learned from his mother. A few men were said to weave, although no men living in Caticugan did so.

868
286
[1/62]

Stripping the fibers from the abaca plant and building the loom are a man's work, whereas the processing of the fiber, weaving and the final preparation of the cloth are a woman's work. Several older women in Caticugan were able to weave when they were in their early teens. There was one abandoned loom in Caticugan that the owner said was smaller than the normal loom; it had been used by a mother to teach the girl to weave. Normally, however a girl learns to weave on the regular-size loom.

No abaca is grown in Caticugan so the fibers must be purchased from abaca-growing communities. This may be a minor factor in the decline of weaving in Caticugan.

286
438
248
[178]

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[11] On this matter see the articles by H. Ling Roth, "Studies in Primitive Looms, Part III: 6. Indonesian Looms," The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland, XLVII, 1917, pp. 323-66.

1 [See p. 710, cat. 286 -- Analyst]

Most abaca used for weaving is bought in the northern barrios of Bantolinao and Nasig-id. Several women were furnished abaca by the owner who later received one-half of the cloth.

Fiber to be woven must be stripped from the abaca plant with special care; for example, no pulp should remain on the fiber. Often growers who sell abaca to the Chinese in Siaton poblacion purposely leave pulp on the fibers so the bundles will weigh more.

Dyes

Three vegetable dyes, tagun, taloto, and antipolo, were once used to dye colored weft thread for abaca cloth. Tagun (Indigofera suffruticosa Mill) grows wild in the nearby hills; once in the past it was cultivated as a source of black dye. Domesticated tagun, according to the barriofolk, made a better dye than the wild variety. Water was heated and tagun leaves were added; a little lime was then sprinkled into this mixture and care taken lest the water boil. "If the water boiled," one woman explained, "the dye was not any good because the leaves became tender right away." Bark of the taloto and antipolo trees was powdered to make a red dye. Red fibers were sometimes re-dyed with tagun "so they would be reddish and very shiny." Today these vegetable dyes are rarely, if ever, used. Weavers buy chemical dyes in the poblacion; a package of four different dyes costs ten cents.